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ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
ORATORY IN LONDON.

BY THE
REV. ORBY SHIPLEY, M.A.

THIRD EDITION.

‘Mr. SHIPLEY has issued a paper, read by him before the Society of the Holy Cross, in which he proposes to establish an Anglican Oratory in the centre of Western London. . . . He urges . . . a permanent Mission to arouse, teach, confirm, and edify the upper and middle classes . . . [the Oratory of which] while aiming at the greatest publicity in its services, would be sheltered from Episcopal interference as being “the private Chapel of a Religious Society.”’

The Times.

London :
JOSEPH MASTERS, NEW BOND STREET.
1871.

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The Four Cardinal Virtues :

Considered in relation to the Public and Private Life of Catholics ; with a Preface and Appendices on the Union of Church and State, Disestablishment, and the Limits of Episcopal Authority. By the Rev. ORBY SHIPLEY, M.A.

London : LONGMANS and CO.

NOTICE.

THE following paper was read before the May Synod, and presented, with additions, to the September Synod, in the year 1870, of the Society of the Holy Cross.

The first edition of this paper was privately circulated. The second was published as an appendix to a volume entitled *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, published by Messrs. Longman. The present is a reprint from the volume, with the permission of the publisher.

Subjoined may be seen the judgments, selected with impartiality, of some organs of public opinion on the following pages.

ORBY SHIPLEY.

Lent, A.D. 1871.

EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS.

‘No one of the smallest weight with our friends would give [the establishment of an Oratory] a moment’s serious consideration. . . . The chief obstacle to Mr. Shipley’s proposal (in its very conception mischievous), is Mr. Shipley’s way of proposing it.’—*Church Times*.

‘The peddling questions about Church upholstery, sacerdotalism, priestly manipulations, attempts to bar or bless every act of life, multiplication of ceremonies . . . are violently opposed to the common sense of the country.’—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

‘Even in this wild strange world of ours, a proposal so inconceivably wild and strange has never yet been made. . . . We are forced to put it in all seriousness—Is Mr. Shipley a Jesuit?’—*Record*.

‘With so many opposite parties united in suggesting the divorce of the Church from the community, it is not improbable that problem may be forced on the public mind before many years have elapsed.’—*Daily Telegraph*.

‘In the preface, broaching the most revolutionary and anti-Anglican views, Mr. Shipley seems to imagine that if his scheme of comparative dis-order were winked at, a complete schism might be avoided.’—*John Bull*.

‘In six sermons of a highly-wrought, intellectual and spiritual cast, Mr. Shipley argues for the establishment of an Oratory in London, and the dissolution of the connection between Church and State.’—*Standard*.

‘Mr. Shipley’s insane scheme we have always looked upon as impracticable, impolitic . . . revolutionary, radical, confusing . . . pandering to the depraved tastes of Puseyite shopboys. We trust no more may be thought of it.’—*Church Herald*.

‘Mr. Shipley does his best to justify the change that has taken place in the opinions of Catholics [on disestablishment], by painting with a vividness which has not often been surpassed, the grievances of which the Church has to complain.’—*English Independent*.

‘The scheme is simply impossible as an agency for good, unless in carrying it out the most scrupulous respect be paid to the disciplinary laws of the Church.’—*Church Review*.

‘The force of the newest phase of the movement consists, not in its theory, but in the new power of clerical pride which it reveals . . . as a militant priesthood, demonstrating at once against the world beneath and the hierarchy above it.’—*Spectator*.

‘We believe Mr. Shipley to be sincere, but his scheme is essentially dishonest, and as such can carry no blessing with it. He inculcates disobedience to bishops, and disobedience to the law.’—*Weekly Register*.

‘It does not come in our way to discuss the proposal for disestablishing the Anglican Church, nor even the “view” about what looks very like disestablishing the authority of the bishops.’—*Tablet*.

‘We quite believe [the Ritual party] are prepared for disestablishment, which they see looming in the distance. They choose to have it forced on them by events, rather than themselves take the initiative.’—*Catholic Opinion*.

‘There is no need to say that Mr. Shipley’s reason for seeking disestablishment and our own are wide as the poles asunder.’—*Nonconformist*.

‘While we hesitate to say that the Oratory scheme does not contain the germ of something workable (we think it does), still in its present form it is too *outré* to be adopted. But let the scheme be ventilated.’—*Literary Churchman*.

‘It is rather amusing to see that the means adopted for propagating opinions of the Evangelicals is now to be utilised by the most extreme section of their opponents.’—*Globe*.

‘Altogether, if this book is to be trusted, which depends upon what we are ignorant of . . . things seem ripe for the formation of a new religious body.’—*Month*.

‘Mr. Shipley’s views have the merit of originality, coupled with one or two such defects as misrepresentation and misapprehension.’—*Echo*.

‘The views of this [Ritual] party are, on many grounds, matters of no small concern to the general politician . . . [and its] action is directed to measures of an unprecedented character.’—*Fortnightly Review*.

‘The question of Church and State seems to have passed out of the theoretical into the practical stage: thoughtful men no longer ask “what is best?” but “what will happen?” and “how soon?”’—*Theological Review*.

‘There is little question that both these ideas [disestablishment and the establishment of an Oratory] will find actual embodiment ere long, though probably not quite in the form Mr. Shipley anticipates.’—*Union Review*.

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
ORATORY IN LONDON.

THE Question of the Establishment of an Oratory in London under the auspices of, and in connection with, the Society of the Holy Cross* has already been discussed at one of its monthly Chapters. The subject has been thought worthy of further consideration at one of its two annual Synods; and I have been entrusted with the duty of placing the matter before you to-day. The question has also been considered apart from the Society, and independently of each other, by many persons, both by some whom I have consulted, and by some who have conferred with me, as well as—later information has shown—by others without the Society. It appears, therefore, to be probable, that the minds of a large number of persons have been turned, by GOD, to this subject. And a question, such as this, which has been made a matter of thought to many persons, is worthy, at the least, of our

* The Society of the Holy Cross is in no way responsible for the opinions expressed in these pages. The writer of them is alone responsible. The Society only affirmed that the establishment of an Oratory, in the abstract and apart from all details of this paper, was deserving of consideration. It was printed in order to afford opportunity for such consideration.

careful consideration ; and perhaps may be worthy, if held to be right and feasible, of being carried into practice.

In order to make the statement to be placed before you as systematic, clear, and concise as possible, it will be well to divide the remarks, which I propose to offer for your consideration, into six parts, and to treat severally,

I. Of the establishment of an Oratory, in the abstract ;

II. Of its establishment in London ;

III. Of the proposed site of the Oratory ;

IV. Of its establishment by the Society of the Holy Cross ;

V. Of some results of its establishment ;

VI. Of the legal and ecclesiastical position of the Oratory, when established.

I. The idea which appears to underlie the thoughts of many, on the Establishment of an Oratory in London by the Society of the Holy Cross, so far as I have been able to judge of and sympathise with them, and expressed in my own words, is as follows : That the Catholic Party, both as a School of Thought, and as a Source of Action, has hitherto been content, perhaps has been forced, to exist upon sufferance only ; but that the time has now come when it should be prepared to act for GOD, either in virtue of its own innate vitality, or upon the strength of its own acquired power. The Catholic Party has been placed, and has acquiesced in being placed, both in doctrine and discipline, both in matters of faith and matters of practice, in a defensive attitude ; but it is high time that it should be freed from a position unworthy of a Movement which, when developed, is at once missionary and refor-

matory. The School of Thought has been wont to advocate, specially in its earlier days, a certain indistinctness in teaching, and has exercised a certain reserve in communicating doctrine, which no doubt was at once expedient and right in the days of its infancy. The Source of Action, though it has effected much to raise in England the standard of Religious Worship, has voluntarily abstained from adopting the highest form of Catholic Ritual; and has hitherto contented itself with accepting as its standard a development considerably below the level of our lawful inheritance. But the time has long passed when such a course, either in dogma or ritual, could be enforced by rightfulness or expediency; and we are now called upon to assert the Truth in act and word in its complete and distinct entirety, and to assume for our Divinely inspired teaching and action an aggressive attitude in the World.

As a matter of fact the Catholic Party forms an element in the Nation. The element cannot, with justice, be called large. It cannot be termed, at the present moment, politically powerful. But, socially, it is sensibly, widely, and rapidly gaining ground. And religiously, it undoubtedly possesses supernatural power, not its own, which, without exaggeration, is extensive, and, even by enemies, is admitted to increase daily. With every qualification, however, the School of Thought and Source of Action form an element in the English polity. We possess our representative men, who are more or less at one with us, in each division of our many-sided state of existence. Such men not only occupy definite positions in their several lines of life, but they occupy definite positions in the Empire, of dignity, of influence, of authority, and of power. We can point with satisfaction to those who, to a greater or a less extent, acknowledge subjection to the Catholic Revival in

places of authority in Church and State, in the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation, in both Houses of Parliament, in past and present Ministries. And it may be asserted, that no Government in the future, either Conservative or Liberal, will be carried on without the same element being present in its composition. We exercise, moreover, an influence on the Bench—though not so large as we shall hereafter exercise, when the principles which govern Church law are more widely accepted by non-ecclesiastical lawyers—and a more powerful influence at the Bar. The public Services, Civil, Military, and Naval, are largely recruited from our numbers. In Mercantile life, in Business, in Trade, we are well represented. Amongst Artisans and the industrial, wealth-producing Classes, and the Poor in general, we are even stronger. And far and wide is the Catholic Movement felt, and being felt is esteemed a blessing, in the million homes and ten million hearths of England.

It is within our power, then, to make our voice to be heard, our influence to be felt, our judgment to be esteemed, and our authority to be respected for good, wherever the English tongue is spoken. We possess all the appliances for these results, either in a state of embryo, or in a condition which only needs development and perfection to render them practically efficacious. We have our Organs of Opinion—such as they are, and utterly unworthy of our intellectual, social, and religious position, as I believe them to be. We have our Societies, our Corporations, and our Organisation—imperfect as they are, desultory as their effects may appear, and disunited as they sometimes prove to be. And the time has come—surely the time has more than come—when we should demand to be recognised as a substantive power and influence in the State.

After an existence of more than a generation—for our origin may be dated from the publication of the ‘Christian Year,’ upwards of forty years ago—it seems to many persons that we may fairly take the initiative more uncompromisingly, that we should not be content with a mere state of toleration, to which alone, up to the present time, we have aspired. To myself, if I may offer an opinion, it seems, and as before GOD I say so, that we *ought* more decidedly to take the initiative. As the subject we have to consider is the Establishment of an Oratory in London by the Society of the Holy Cross, my observations do not overpass that point. But keeping to this point alone, it may be affirmed that, in the public ministrations of our Sacred Office, we have failed to do as much as we might have performed. We have been satisfied to secure, here and there, a Church, a Chapel, or a District devoid of both. We have considered ourselves fortunate to obtain possession of a District Church, where the Parish Church was closed against us ; or to secure a footing in out-of-the-way places, or in places neglected by others, or in places too poor to attract competition. We have, as it were, taken up a position in No-man’s-land, and have founded to ourselves Churches, established Schools, and built Clergy-houses on neutral ground, where none could gain-say our title of tenure. And so far good. More could hardly be expected at the outset of a Movement essentially reformatory in character and work. Reformers must be content, and we were and are content, to begin our career quietly and humbly. It would have been of serious harm to the cause had it been otherwise. To escape popularity, and to ensure neglect, are fair grounds for securing disinterestedness and sincerity.

You will not, for a moment, suppose that I do otherwise than give honour to all such efforts made on behalf

of GOD'S Church and GOD'S Poor ; nor that I should venture to say, that those who made such efforts were in a position to do otherwise than they did. I only hold that now, after nearly half a century of revived work in England, we probably are, or certainly ought to be, in a position to effect more, far more, infinitely more. Progress onwards, however, presupposes either a starting-point, whence to begin ; or progress already made, which may be improved. In contemplating further advance on a position already attained, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that (if I may venture to praise where I have no right to criticise) I allow all possible credit to those from whose starting-point we may again advance, or whose progress we are enabled to follow up and complete. But on this question, we all, probably, agree, that the time has now arrived when the line of tactics formerly adopted, must be abandoned for a course of action at once bolder and more consistent, more demonstrative and less compromising. In GOD'S Strength, and under His Providence, we must act with less timidity and diffidence ; and as against the World, we must act more openly and aggressively. We must not be, we are not, content with a mere hole-and-corner existence, upon sufferance. We are capable to, and must, come forth from the catacombs of comparative obscurity, and show ourselves to our fellow Christians in the full blaze of GOD'S daylight. We must not be, we are not, content to be at the mercy either of complacent and impressible churchwardens, or of sympathetic and hearty congregations, or of public prestige and influence, based perhaps on former work. We are capable to, and must, stand upright and alone, without the dangerous, uncertain, and changeful support of any of these three forms of co-operation. We must not be, we are not, again, content with that worse than unprincipled

form of existence, which is sometimes put forward with approbation, but which altogether ignores the authority, position, and functions of the Priesthood—that we are forced onwards and upwards, and held in the position we have reached, through the instrumentality of the laity. That the question is a layman's question may be admitted; but not in this form. We are capable to, and must, act upon higher, purer, bolder Catholic motives, upon less interested, less conventional, less timid Catholic principles. Once more, we must not be, we are not, content to be dependent upon Episcopal favour or patronage, upon Episcopal shortsightedness or forbearance, even upon Episcopal influence and authority. We are capable to, and, in GOD'S holy Name, we must, act of ourselves, and, if it be needful, by ourselves, on our own responsibility and on our own authority, in virtue of the sacred and very definite commission given us, severally as well as corporately, individually as well as generally, as Priests of His Church, by GOD Himself.

These thoughts, briefly, but not without much consideration, put together, will tend, if accepted, to show that the Establishment of an Oratory, to be hereafter described, either in the form proposed, or under some similar conditions, is no imaginary necessity. Its need at once exists and arises from the position of the Catholic Party as it now finds itself placed with regard to Society at large, which it has always to influence ; to the State, to which it is now unequally yoked ; to the Church, whose only legitimate offspring it claims to be, and whose only dutiful child — despite all shortcomings, failures, and actual sins—it undoubtedly is. As such, the idea, I earnestly believe, is deserving of the counsels, the efforts, and the prayers of the Society of the Holy Cross.

II. The question—Wherefore should the Oratory be established in London? is not a difficult question to answer.

London is yearly becoming, more and more completely, what Paris formerly boasted itself to be, and to a certain extent still may be considered, the point towards which, with ever-increasing attraction, concentrate the efforts of the heart, the head and the hand, as well as the will of this great Nation. Many causes are at work to produce this result. The unwonted, and abnormal additions to the population of this ‘province covered with houses,’ as it has well been described by a foreigner, may be one cause. The converging influences towards—some of which are intelligible, some unreasonable, and all undeniable—despite the sanatory, physical, if not moral repugnances from, London, which concentrate the intellect and talent, the science, art, and letters, the learning and education, the theory of all kinds and practice of many kinds, upon this huge centre of English culture, refinement and civilisation, is another cause. The facilities in time and money, and the conveniences in ease and comfort, of modern locomotion, is a third. Whilst the last that need be mentioned, is the fact which—for more reasons than may be shortly given—has almost ceased to be represented by a figure of speech, that every one comes once a year to London; and that yearly the metaphor more and more nearly represents the actual truth. Hence, as the permanent centre, as well as the temporary abode, of the moral, physical, and intellectual forces of the nation, London to a large extent at once directs and influences, and also rules and governs England. And amongst other ways in which this law holds good may be mentioned, as not the least noteworthy, and as most nearly connected with our present enquiry, the case of the Revival in our midst of the Catholic Religion.

The venerable and learned University, under whose shadow—both literally and in figure—the Revival originated, and in whose precincts, for many years, it struggled for the mastery, as a matter of fact, has long since lost a lead to which it never avowedly aspired, and which we must thank GOD heartily it never, for any appreciable length of time, definitely held. This remark is made in full and hearty recognition of all that we owe, of all that the Church owes, to the Early Tractarians. The Catholic Reformation in the Church of England simply and entirely owes *everything* to the Oxford Movement. Yet, this sense of obligation and gratitude must not blind us to the truth, that it has been good for the Movement that its centre of action has been removed, geographically, from the provinces to the metropolis; has been transferred, from a provincial town, albeit a University city, to the capital of the empire. This migration (in the language of *Alma Mater*) has given to a Movement which possessed but a local name and place, (in the language of the Empire) a cosmopolitan position and character. And this development in the status and condition of the phase of religious life which we are considering is delicately, yet clearly, marked in the change of title which has been imperceptibly, but surely, assumed for the phase. The ‘Oxford Movement,’ both in name and work, has become a matter of history. In its place we hear of, and are influenced by, the ‘Catholic Revival.’ Yet, it cannot be too often repeated nor too deeply impressed upon all whom it concerns, that, apart from the condition of developement which is essential to a Religious Reformation, the Catholic Revival, both in principle and in practice, is absolutely at one with the Oxford Movement.

But the Oxford Movement is not, at the present time,

coextensive with the Catholic Revival. And it is a striking testimony to the working of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT in the dry bones of Anglican Establishmentarianism, to observe the course of the reinvigorated Movement of late years. In spite of—possibly, in the secret workings of Providence, in order to teach us to lean upon no leaders, Priestly or Episcopal, to trust in no authority short of that of the Church, in consequence of—the defection of its leaders, the Revival has since that time marvellously flourished. The defection, when the widespread drainage Rome-wards had been comparatively checked, left the Party, as an organism, without recognised leaders; and with hardly leading men to lead—with the exception, in those days, of two only, who in different degrees at all could vie with the one eminently great man whom we had lost. The balance, however, again in GOD'S Providence, by the mysterious law of compensation, was more than restored. For the Church self-produced a power which she certainly did not previously possess. She produced a practical working power, which, in nowise remarkable for intellectual strength, theological attainment, or controversial efficiency, possessed an undoubted and undeniable genius for practical hard work in the LORD'S Vineyard.

Hence, perhaps—both from the absence of recognised leaders, and also from the large increase of practical and independent workers—originated that democratic element, which now is certainly another distinctive note of the Catholic Revival, and one that divides it from its earliest phase of the undeveloped Oxford Movement. The last was exclusive, select, almost aristocratic in its sentiments, and at the least class-formed. It was also, from an Episcopal point of view, monarchical. The first is wide, general, unfettered by class, or, if anything, appeals to the

many, instead of to the few. From force of circumstances, it is content to rely upon the Priestly commission, as including all but a single prerogative of the Episcopate, and *that* essential only to the continuance and government, not to the ordinary Sacramental work, of the Church. But the change in the character and practice of the Revival as developed out of the Movement was in part the cause of, and in part was caused by, the change of centre beyond the confined radius of an ancient provincial University to the comparatively boundless circumference of a modern and cosmopolitan capital. London, therefore, of late years has more than occupied the position which Oxford once held. And London, providentially it would seem, has now gained the presence of the one man, of the generation next below the Fathers of the Tractarian Movement, on whose shoulders, of late years, the burden of the Oxford School has almost entirely rested, and who cannot fail to make his great gifts and undeniable power to be felt both amongst his friends and by his opponents.

London has attracted to itself the Oxford Movement, which has hence become developed into the Catholic Revival. It may be affirmed, therefore, considering the changes which have ensued in the course of the development, and over and above its national advantages, that London is not only the best site in which to found the Oratory now contemplated by the Society of the Holy Cross, but that it is the only practicable site on which to begin the work. And here, without being forgetful of the proverb, that he who putteth on his armour boast not himself as he that putteth it off, it may be remarked, that the intention with which an Oratory should be established in London, would be this—that it shall prove a supplementary work to work already existing in this vast city. Anticipation is not realisation; and obstacles the same

in degree, but different in kind, may make shipwreck of this plan, as they have crippled many another and better design. Yet, if the standard be not higher than the height actually to be reached, the average of measurements will fall absolutely short of actual requirements. Hence, while fully acknowledging the work done by other Churches, their chiefs, and their staff of coadjutors—and they are many—to have been emphatically a good, a blessed, and a lasting work, we may, without presumption, express a desire to begin where they leave off, and a wish to be allowed to carry on a prosperous commencement to a successful close.

Other Catholic Churches in London have done, and are doing, noble work for the good of souls and the glory of GOD. But their work is *sui generis*. Its characteristics may be described by the terms, retiring, local, confined, limited. No doubt, by force of circumstances any given Church may have thrown off its *specialité* and from desiring to be unobserved has been the centre of all observation; instead of having local interest only, has become cosmopolitan in its interests and the interests it excites; in the place of being confined in its work, influences England; after having been crippled by a limited supply of helpers, now finds itself overpowered with offers of assistance. London Churches might be named for which one or more of these assertions might be claimed as true—the Church of S. Alban-the-Martyr, Holborn, amongst others. But the Oratory contemplated by the Society of the Holy Cross would voluntarily and deliberately assume a position into which other Churches, in one or more particulars, have been accidentally placed—perhaps against their will. For instance :—They have been forced to work in comparatively out-of-the-way parts of London, where they might be easily overlooked.

We desire to force ourselves into a position of which none can plead ignorance. They have been content to use, specially at the first, with certain noble exceptions, humble buildings for purposes of worship. We propose to possess, eventually, an imposing, and if you please, a pretentious building. They were obliged by a lack of Priest-power, to divide their forces and hence to weaken their efforts; and could offer to the faithful, at certain hours, certain services only—and liberally did they give of their substance, according to their means. We are wishful to concentrate upon one centre a sufficient number of Clergy to allow of a constant and continual succession of Celebrations, Offices, Hours, or Preachings, all day long and every day of the week. They intended to Christianise a parish or district. We aspire, directly or indirectly, to evangelise England. They were constrained to carry on their labours with the help of one or two or more able and earnest fellow-labourers. We desire, by GOD'S Blessing, to attract many men of varied powers, and continually to ensure within the circle of our staff, the services of a really deep Theologian, of a learned Casuist, of an experienced Confessor, of a discreet Director, of an accomplished Musician, of a well-read and practical Ritualist, of an able Preacher, and of a zealous Conductor of Retreats and Missions. Lastly, they were usually intent on securing some one point perfectly developed—be that effort directed to ritual, music, oratory, or awakening of souls. We are determined, GOD willing, to combine goodness, if not perfection, in each branch of our public ministrations; nor shall we feel that we are doing GOD'S work worthily, if we provide not the best of all things attainable for His Divine Service.

Such requirements can only be attained, such results

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can only be realised, in London. And the intentions of the founders of the Oratory of the Society of the Holy Cross would only be fulfilled when, from small beginnings, perhaps, and gradually, they were enabled to establish in or near a great thoroughfare, a huge modern Church, a Cathedral in its dimensions, more than a Cathedral in the dignity and pomp, in the warmth and fervour, in the reverence and devotion of its Offices. Such a Church, without, should be large enough to challenge attention; within, its functions should be imposing enough to command respect. It should stand in the position to the country, only intensified, which S. Barnabas' once occupied, which All Saints' later filled, which S. Alban's has now had forced upon it. It should be a Church to which 'country cousins' might be referred if they desire to see what the Services of the Church of England were capable of; which country visitors would as naturally seek, once at least during their sojourn in Town, as they now flock to the Royal Academy. Such a Church might at the first be as ugly as may be conceived, in construction; as plain as is meet, or as may be consistent with comeliness, for the worshipper; as rich and beautiful and gorgeous as it is possible, as costly as devotion could command and means afford, in all that concerns the Great OBJECT of Worship within its walls. It might gather together an united band of Brothers, each one of whom would be distinguished for some one special gift or grace. It might offer to all who choose to avail themselves of its spiritual privileges, a constant succession of services—Sacraments, Offices, Litanies, Preachings, Prayer and Praise. Such a Church might eventually become the Mother Church of many Oratories both in London and in other large centres of life and action, such as Liver-

pool, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Sheffield, Birmingham, Coventry, or Wolverhampton. It might form a centre round which the faithful in coming troubles from our present connection with, and our future dissolution from, the State could rally. It might seek to be the pattern Church which, without rivalry, all would gladly copy because all would heartily strive to perfect; and it might, if it so please GOD, eventually be made the Memorial Church of the Oxford Movement, and might become the crown and completion and consummation of the Catholic Revival.

III. The proposed site for the Oratory of the Society of the Holy Cross.

There is a spiritual desert in this huge city bounded on the north by Oxford Street and Holborn, south by Piccadilly and the Strand, and west by Hyde Park, which, speaking roughly, ends in a point at S. Paul's Cathedral. In this wilderness I know of but a single oasis, one green spot with pasturage, shade, and water—a spot whereon fresh tents are now being pitched, and old tents (it is a matter of congratulation) are now having their cords lengthened, and their stakes increased—the oasis of S. Mary-the-Virgin, Crown Street. On the north of Oxford Street there is, indeed, a chain of Churches, more or less Catholic in character, beginning with S. Mary Magdalene, Paddington, passing on to S. Cyprian, Mary-le-bone; S. Mary Magdalene, Munster Square; All Saints', Margaret Street; Christ Church, Albany Street; and ending with S. Alban's, Holborn. This list might have been enlarged, to include the more northerly churches at Kilburn, Hackney, Stoke Newington, and Shoreditch. But enough have been mentioned to show how strong a line of forts, so to say, are in our possession on the north of

Oxford Street; or, to change the simile, how many springs of living water there are which drain, fairly well, the Catholic population, and draw to such centres the faithful whose lot is cast in that district of London. On the south side of the line of which Piccadilly, in general terms, forms the middle portion, and which runs east and west through the southern parts of London, we possess proportionately few centres of operation, or comparatively few religious points of attraction. We have indeed the noble work in Pimlico carried on and extended by worthy successors of the founder: we have S. Mary-le-Strand, a strong and an important bulwark of Catholicism in the south: we have perhaps another church or two. But, as a fact, which it is hard to account for, but cannot be denied, the Catholic centres of action in this part of London lie to the north of the Oxford Street line of thoroughfare. And in that important district which lies between Regent Street and Hyde Park, there exists absolutely no Catholic teaching.

It is, therefore, within these four boundaries, Park Lane, Piccadilly, Regent Street, and Oxford Street, that the Society of the Holy Cross is asked to found an Oratory. This district is selected for two reasons. Firstly, because in itself it is an arid, dry, and desolate region which needs cultivation. Secondly, because it lies midway between two other regions which to a certain extent, though not to so large a degree, need the fertilising influences of our holy Religion to be brought to bear on them—Belgravia and Tyburnia. An Oratory in almost any part of the proposed base of operations would be in the middle of one important area, would be easily accessible from either of the other two. It would be central for a large population of wealth, influence, position, intelligence, and lastly of immortal souls craving for

Spiritual Discipline, Catholic Teaching, and the Bread of Life. It would prove an attractive force to many who share the same blessings in other districts more remote. The remarkable document which took the form of a reply to an appeal for money from the Churchwardens of S. George's, Hanover Square, and which was largely and influentially signed, both at first and afterwards, is a sufficient proof of this prediction. The no less remarkable success of a great and earnest preacher (who it is to be regretted cannot be claimed as an ally) in a small chapel in the parish of S. James, suggests a hope which almost involves a certainty, that good Catholic preaching—to omit higher and more real attractions—would meet with no less a measure of success under the Blessing of GOD.

Neither would the site proposed tend to drain only the districts named, to influence only the classes mentioned. The irregular quadrilateral would be situated within easy reach of the London Clubs; and however little club-life may be thought deserving of consideration, there is no doubt that elements from its vortex would be attracted to the centre which it is intended to found. And this is one other section of society which might be influenced by the proposed Oratory. But there is yet one more. The proposed boundary of operations either includes, or only fails to include, most of the large West-end business or trade establishments with their numerous trains of assistants. Some of these mercantile houses give employment to a large number of persons, both men and women, from which many recruits not only might be, but are already found, to swell the Catholic cause. And the foundation of an Oratory would, without doubt, tend to multiply such numbers.

An opinion long held by others and myself of the

spiritual destitution of the higher orders in London was lately and incidentally confirmed from an unexpected source. At a meeting of Clergy and laity held after the Great Mission of 1869, composed mainly of those who were not, on the whole, in sympathy with or favourable to the Mission, an opinion was repeatedly expressed that however much a Mission was needed to evangelise the Masses, the well-to-do Middle and Upper Classes of this city were even more in need of spiritual arousing, teaching, confirming, and edifying. There have been and there are existing permanent Missions to the poorer millions in the streets of London. Why should there not be a permanent Mission to the Upper-ten-thousand, and to the great Middle Class immediately below the summit of society in the West-end districts? The establishment of the Oratory of the Society of the Holy Cross would satisfactorily answer such a question. Only those who have been more directly brought into contact with these classes know how deep is the need of such a permanent Mission, both where such need is felt (which is a wide space), and also (and this is still wider) where such need is felt not at all.

It has been said that one object in view was to establish an Oratory in some leading thoroughfare in London. Such a foundation might be at once impossible, and unwise even if practicable, at the outset. It were better, for many reasons, to begin both in a small way, and in a retired quarter, at first. The example of our Roman brethren who have built a church in a stable-yard is worthy of imitation—in spirit, if not in letter. Possibly some similar site might be found to offer a home for the Oratory of the Holy Cross; and a work begun in a small way, in such a quarter, would soon make its position to be known, and might be suggestive, after a while, to some

person capable of advancing its interests, to provide a more suitable place for its accommodation. Under any circumstances, however, it would be wise for the Society itself to begin operations on a small scale. Such a work must be the work of years. It may not spring mushroom-like in an evening into perfection. The wherefore is not far to seek. It would be necessary for the workers of such a scheme themselves to know each other, and to learn respectively both how to obey as well as how to command, and how to work together in unity as brethren, before they undertook to conduct a Mission on a large scale, to the World without. And the rule which should guide the personal workers, should be the law also for the material portion of their work—a small beginning, which should develope to the greater glory of GOD, into a large and important ending.

IV. The establishment of an Oratory in London which has been thus spoken of in general terms, could only be undertaken by a body of Priests situated as the Brethren of the Society of the Holy Cross. No Society which is not in possession of the strength of numbers, unity of object, diversity of talent, variety of resources, and concentration of power which are possessed by us could hope to attain any such end. But, with GOD'S help, and the co-operation which the establishment of an Oratory could not fail to ensure, what might not a body of between two and three hundred Catholic Priests—in part scattered over the country, and in part concentrated in London, both portions being yearly and rapidly increased in numbers—effect? What results might not such a body of Priests, who, if not all picked men, from a common sense of common danger and in search of a common end, have all been drawn, one by one, to a common centre—if only

they gave themselves to the work—produce? For it is not to be expected, if begun for the greater glory of GOD, and the good of souls, and steadily continued to that end, that the work would not prosper, that the work would not grow. It would naturally by force of circumstances, and supernaturally by the power of Grace, attract to itself men of mark willing to work, and men of power who would gain for the work a name. Men would be called of GOD from different parts of the country to come and join this work in London. And GOD would make them come. They would even be enabled, perhaps would be called of Him, to leave a good work in the provinces to help build up even a better, because a wider, work in the capital. Nor is this surmise a mere conjecture. For it so happened—perhaps I ought to speak less unhesitatingly—that the two earliest applications which I was led to make by letter (after the proposal of the establishment of an Oratory had been accepted as a subject to be considered by the Society) to Priests of mature age and dignified position in the Church, as well as of undeniably great power and ability in the country—who were already doing a good work in their own sphere of labour—were in both cases answered not only sympathetically, but hopefully, and even sanguinely. It is not perhaps too much to affirm, that both Priests were prepared, under certain circumstances, if it so please GOD, to leave their present work, and to join in our labour, if it should be established. And many others, we may be assured, would equally feel the attractive power of such an Oratory, would be equally ready to listen to the call of GOD.

The way in which the Oratory of the Holy Cross might practically be worked, in the event of GOD being pleased to allow of its establishment, would be somewhat after this fashion. The Priests of the Society of the Holy

Cross would be its motive power; both Priests residing at or adjoining the Oratory, and Priests living in their own sphere of parish work, or in their own homes in London. There would be, in the first place, a governing body of three, five, or seven Priests, elected annually, or for two or more years, and presided over by a Head, who would also be elected for a definite term of office. Then, there would be formed a staff—at the outset a small staff—of Clergy attached to the Oratory, which would be gradually strengthened, and which would be responsible in the main for the performance of the Divine Offices. This body of Clergy would undertake the ordinary round of services : and its component parts might conveniently be called the Father, Master, Provost, or Warden, as the case may be, and Brethren of the Oratory. There would also be the other force of Priest-power at work to carry on all Services which were not essential, to fill up, as it were, the outline made by the former body ; which force would consist of the members of the Society of the Holy Cross external to the Oratory, either living in, or visiting London. And the form which their extra-ordinary assistance would assume would be that of a cycle of help, each parish Priest, or Priest permanently in London, being responsible in a certain cycle for a certain amount of work. The cycle would be larger or smaller according to the amount of aid which each extern Priest found himself enabled, either by himself or his coadjutors, to afford. But it is probable, from the strength of the Society within the limits of the (national) metropolis, that each Priest would not be called upon more than once in a fortnight for assistance on week-days, and once in a month, or less often, for help on Sundays and Saints' Days : whilst the Seasons of Advent and Lent or other special times might be arranged hereafter, as a matter of detail.

The manner in which 'extern' help might be afforded may be thus described:—The Priest would reach the Clergy-house of the Oratory on the afternoon or evening of the day for which he is responsible for the extra-ordinary Services. He would 'take' the Evensong, or recite the Vesper or Compline Hours (to distinguish between the Anglican Offices and Canonical Hours), as the case may be, the same night. He would also hear confessions, before, between, or after the Services, in his own Confessional; and would be accessible to all who chose to claim his attention either in the Sacristy or the Clergy-house up to a reasonable hour at night. Next morning, he would say Mass at his given hour; he would 'take' Matins or recite the Hours, be present in his Confessional, or be in waiting in the Sacristy; and he would complete his round of duty by saying Sext at mid-day before returning to his own abode. He would thus spend three parts of the day, on the average we have supposed, in direct work at the Oratory once a fortnight.

Could the Brethren of the Society of the Holy Cross, specially those engaged in their own special sphere of work, afford to devote such time and labour to their Oratory? I think that they could. For it must not be forgotten that, thereby and to a certain extent, such Priests would lessen their labours, at least those of a more private sort, at home. When it was known, as it would at once be known, that the Priest, let us say, to take an extreme case, that the Priest of S. Peter-in-the-Docks was due at the Oratory of the Holy Cross, in the quadrilateral above-named, on a certain day, his penitents from the West-end of London could make their confession to him on the evening and receive the Blessed Sacrament from his hands on the morning following: whilst those who were not his penitents, or who might

become so, or who desired his spiritual counsel or advice, might resort to him with less difficulty to themselves and more easily for him, at the Oratory than miles away in the East of London. This is no fancy demand ; this is no ideal supply. The want is felt of being able to see Priests who live afar off : and it would be a great boon to many who live in the spiritual deserts of Belgravia and Tyburnia to know that, at a given place and at certain times, Priests whom they desired to consult would always be prepared to be consulted. And this want, by the Establishment of the Oratory of the Holy Cross, would be supplied.

V. We will now consider some of the results which may be attained by the Establishment of an Oratory, by the Society of the Holy Cross.

The regular round of Services which the Oratory could offer to Catholics, of course, would depend to a large extent upon the strength of its staff, and the offer of occasional daily help which it might be enabled to command. The *minimum* of Services which the Oratory should offer, when in the full swing of work, may thus be described :—

Two, three, four, or more daily Celebrations of Mass, one of which should be High Mass, at not less than hourly intervals ; with additional Masses, before and after the regular Mass, for strangers, occasional helpers, or residents in London who gave due notice of their intention the day before. The number of Masses would also depend on the form and character of the Oratory. If it were feasible, as it would be most desirable, to build side Altars for Low Mass, the number of Celebrations might be increased, and the succeeding Masses might follow at somewhat shorter intervals, and perhaps for a

few minutes might overlap each other, so that the introductory part of one Mass might be contemporaneous with the ablutions or last Gospel of another. The advantage to 'stranger' Priests of an opportunity to say Mass, by merely giving timely notice, is very great. Practically, it is almost impossible for a country Clergyman to say his Mass either on Sundays or week-days during his stay in town : and the favour granted once by any given Church can seldom be repeated. The hours of such additional Masses might be notified at Evensong of the day before, and published on the Notice-boards within and without the Oratory. The multiplication of Masses would necessitate a corresponding number of Sacristans and Servers and a proportionate supply of Vestments and Altar-Linen: and also—and this is a point of considerable importance, and one strangely overlooked, or unprovided for, by the architect of every modern Church that may be seen in England—a Sacristy of sufficiently roomy dimensions, to prevent unseemly crowding and inconvenience. As a rule our Sacristies are absurdly out of proportion, not only to the strain now placed upon them—which might be an excuse, but to the actual requirements of the chancel and choir, for the use of which they have been planned by the architect—and which hence can afford no excuse for insufficiency. Such oversight might be easily avoided in the Oratory of the Society of the Holy Cross. Perhaps two Sacristies, one for Priests and another for the Choir, would tend to ensure order and reverence, and to prevent crowding and confusion.

The mode in which High Mass should be sung in the Oratory of the Society of the Holy Cross on Festivals, should be of the highest type known to Catholic Christendom, by which the Holy Sacrifice may be offered according to the use of the Church of England. It should

possess every element in ritual, and music, and other accessories which the tradition of the Church sanctions. It should possess every feature which characterised the beautiful and carefully rendered function in which we had the privilege of joining on the first day of the Synod, in this Church of S. Peter; and which, so far as I have seen, was one of the most perfect forms of Divine Worship England has yet witnessed. You will not, therefore, consider me to be wanting in appreciation for the use of S. Peter's if I name as essentials for the Oratory of the Future, elements which, for some good reason, may have been wanting in this Church. But the founders of the Oratory would not feel satisfied until they restored to the Church of England a rendering of the sacred Mass which was fully mediæval in the correctness of its use, and more than mediæval in the richness, costliness, taste, and perfection of its details. Thus we should desiderate these elements at the least:—The Asperges; the 'Censing of persons and things' or the use of incense in a ritual manner; the correct Introits, Graduals, Offer-tories, Communions; Gospel Lights; Consecration Lights on the Altar and Consecration Candles in front of the Altar, in addition to the Six Altar Candles and two Sacramental Lights; the use of the Altar Bell; the Lavabo; and, of course, the Eucharistic Vestments, for Celebrant, Ministers, Servers, and Acolytes. Into the dangerous arena of Music I will not adventure myself further than to express an opinion that music, more popular, though music of the best composers, might be used in the Oratory, than is sometimes employed in our Churches, for what is in truth, and should ever be made to be, the popular service—the Offering of the Sacrifice: and to this end the aid of orchestral music might be employed to co-operate with the organ; and a large west-

end organ might be made to supplement, or harmonise with, a smaller instrument in the chancel. The erection of a west-end gallery, also, might be made to secure the services of a supplementary choir of mixed voices—an addition to our choral rendering of services which has Continental authority and should not be allowed to escape us from the fact of the practice being either abused in, or connected with our early impressions of, Puritan times. But from an unfortunate ignorance of Music, on this point I will say no more.

Low Mass might be said as plainly, simply, and shortly as is consistent with Catholic use: and to attain the last-named condition, Low Mass might be commenced with the Collect for the day.

Matins might be said plainly, without music.

The forenoon Choir Offices and Hours, specially Sext, might also be said plainly.

The afternoon Hours, Evensong, Vespers, and Compline-song, might be choral. And here again we might, perhaps, with advantage, adopt the custom used abroad with effect, of having some of the Offices sung by men-voices alone, without the aid of boys. Gregorian chants, sung slowly, with voices more or less bass in range, have a grand effect. And such a choir for some, not for all of the Offices, might be obtained by the co-operation of those large centres of business which abound in the West-end, and which are more or less connected with the trade of Linen-draper and Silk-mercant. For this purpose one of two courses must be adopted. The Oratory must either have the Vesper-song late and Evensong early; or the Vesper-Hours early and Evening Prayer late. The Oratory will desire to minister to two sets of worshippers—the fashionable and less industrious, and the more industrious and mercantile sections of

society. If the staff of Priests were sufficiently large, either Evening Prayer or Vesper-song, or both, might be duplicated daily, at the respectable High Church Vesper hour of five *p.m.*, and the practical Catholic man-of-business hour of eight: whilst Compline might follow at nine *p.m.*, or even later. To accomplish this multiplication of services, however, a double choir would be needful, and two organists, as well as two sets of Clergy.

Litanies, the Stations, and other Penitential Offices, both weekly and throughout the seasons of Lent and Advent might also be said or used. And especially the simple, but most touching and devout Office, the 'Stations of the Cross,' might be said on Fridays both within and without the Lenten season.

In addition to these Services which are more or less regular in their character, the Oratory might provide for special courses of Sermons; popular Conferences; Lectures theological and otherwise; Readings on Holy Scripture; Instructions for different classes and either sex; Classes for men and women, for Confirmation or Communion; Missions for all the world; Retreats for both Clergy and people; and Meetings, Chapters, and Synods for such Religious Societies as the Society of the Holy Cross, its daughter the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, and the English Church Union.

Confessionals should also be erected in the Oratory with the days, hours, and Priest's name in attendance plainly printed on the outside.

And the last requisite I shall name is the great and inestimable blessing, the Reserved Presence on the High Altar, with its ever-burning beacon lamp. This is perhaps the last great need which the Revival still lacks, to complete and perfect the Catholicity of the Oxford Movement. Of course the Reservation will be made on behalf of the

sick. But there is no reason wherefore the whole as well as the sick should not benefit by the fact of Reservation. I mean, not in the way of worship; for this could be denied to none: but in the way of reception. There is no reason why we should not return to the *principle* of absolutely primitive times, and be enabled to communicate when we list—only in Church instead of at home; why we should not adopt the *practice* of the Catholic Church, and be enabled to receive, without hearing Mass—to communicate, without joining in offering the Sacrifice. A short Office, like the one employed abroad, might easily be framed from the Order in use in the West: and many persons would have summarily taken from them the excuse (of which we do not accept the principle) of a long Service preceding reception—the excuse for reception, utterly unknown to Catholic Christendom, otherwise than by fasting from bodily food. Hence, Fasting Communion would become more common, and the lesson learnt in London would, in many cases, be taken away and repeated to others in the country. Reservation, also, would permit of that beautiful complement to Morning Mass being ultimately introduced amongst us, I mean the Evening Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Other questions connected with this portion of the subject demand a passing notice.

The Oratory of the Holy Cross would be the centre of no parish, and consequently would be hampered by no parish work, would be burdened by no parish schools, would be distracted by no parish troubles. The Society numbers too many parish priests among its members to need more than the assertion of these characteristics of the proposed Oratory to ensure acquiescence in their importance.

The form which the Oratory itself (in my idea of its

creation) should assume is that of an ancient basilica Church, adapted to suit modern requirements. Such a form possesses many advantages in our climate, in the locality in which it is to be built, and for the purposes to which we intend to apply it. A basilica, with a deeply incised, flat roof within, would be more easy to make warm in winter, to keep cool in summer, to regulate in temperature and to ventilate at all times, than a Church with a single and pointed roof, built in the Gothic style. It would also allow of a plainer exterior, with the exception, perhaps, of a handsome west front facing the street, in connection with a richer interior, without erecting a building entirely devoid of taste. In the atmosphere and surroundings of London, red brick, either alone, or in combination with black or coloured brick, or stone, or marble, for a material, would be at once appropriate and seemly: and a larger use might be made internally of the same material, in constructional ornament, in window tracery, and even in single or clustered columns and arches, than has yet been attempted in this country. Specimens of this use of brick are to be found in the Churches of North Italy, and the artistic effect is great.

The Altar should be placed in the chord of the apse, which itself should be lengthened eastwards and contain at least three rows of seats sufficient to accommodate a large choir of Priests, choir-men, and boys. The High Altar would thus be within sight of nearly the whole of the worshippers. The ways of approach to and departure from the Altar, which ought to be different, should be wide and roomy. By a disposition of light not difficult to obtain, an East window should be avoided, which it is disagreeable for a congregation to face in the daytime; and its place should be filled with frescoes, mosaics, or mural decorations which will light up effec-

tively at night. The seats, open beneath and with wooden kneelers affixed, where a round of frequent services prevails, should not be moveable. Chairs, though picturesque, are practically laborious in their arrangement: but the seats should not bear a large proportion to the capabilities of the building for holding numbers. The seats and kneelers at S. Alban's, in their proportions of height and width, absolutely and relatively, and in the distance between the several rows, appear to be models of convenience and comfort. It is said that these proportions were adopted after many practical experiments. It need hardly be added that the seats in the Oratory would be free to all comers. Persons should be encouraged, as they are abroad, to stand or kneel only, without support; which in the case of short Offices they can easily, and in the case of popular preachers they willingly do, without fatigue. As it has been indicated, there should be Confessionals on either side of the Church, a western gallery with a large organ, a chancel organ, space behind the High Altar for an orchestra, and side altars, at least one at the extremity of each *quasi*-aisle, and one behind the High Altar, perhaps *dos-à-dos*, and facing west. The High Altar should be furnished with a *baldachino*. A large roomy pulpit, with an hour-glass and a crucifix attached, surmounted by a sounding-board, should be placed one-third down the nave, and seats might be placed opposite to it for the use of the officiating Clergy. Holy Water should be supplied at the entrances of the Oratory, which should be numerous and well protected against draughts. And Sacristies, as has been said, of suitable proportions, and communicating both with the chancel and the clergy-house direct, should not be forgotten. Such are some of the details of construction which might perhaps with advantage be adopted in the Oratory of the Holy Cross;

for many of them we have the practical sanction of Continental Catholicism, though they may be locally unknown to us in England.

The funds for the support of the Oratory if once established, and if built on a sufficiently large scale, would be provided for out of the Offertory. If begun in a temporary building, all moneys received in excess of expenditure might be funded to gather interest for a permanent building. After a permanent building has been completed, they might form the nucleus of an endowment for the Oratory.

A wide field of work might be opened hereafter to such an Oratory as the one proposed, which may here be only indicated—a temporary abode or permanent Home for invalid, over-worked or aged Priests; Schools for the educating and training of choir-boys and men; a Training College for parochial Schoolmasters—a crying need under the pressure of the new national and godless Education Bill; a College in preparation for Holy Orders; Institutions for the relief of the distressed, or for improving the social and material condition of the poor.

A Superior—if such there can be found—to take the lead in such a work must be no ordinary man. He should possess many opposite, though by no means incompatible qualities. He should be blessed with physical power and good health. He should have a capacity for organising and governing; and not be wanting in keenness for details and experience in obedience. A knowledge of music, if not its practice, is needful. A knowledge of human nature, acquired in the Confessional amongst other means, is essential. And a gift of preaching, a mind stored with theology, practical familiarity with ritual, and acquaintance with more than the elements of casuistry, would add much to the influence of the Superior. Lastly, he should

be a Christian gentleman. Where may so much be found in a single Priest? Speaking even to the Society of the Holy Cross I am not ashamed to confess that I cannot tell. Perhaps GOD would raise us up such a man. Perhaps such an one exists already amongst us, though unknown.

The manner in which a scheme, such as I have had the honour to submit for your consideration, should practically be commenced, I am not prepared to describe. Amongst other means which might be adopted for collecting necessary funds, may be mentioned one which would to some extent drain the resources of the country, as well as tend to interest the Church in the provinces. It is this—the organisation of a Preaching Mission to travel through England to make known the proposed establishment of the Oratory of the Holy Cross. In the event, however, of a committee of the Society of the Holy Cross being appointed to consider the question as a whole, this very practical detail would doubtless receive due attention.

VI. Lastly, we must consider the position of the Oratory when established, in the country and in the Church.

It may be asked upon what basis, legal and ecclesiastical, would the Oratory of the Holy Cross be established? The Ecclesiastical position is the only position with which the Society of the Holy Cross need be concerned. But it may be mentioned in passing that, although the Society would not in any way rest its claims to the establishment of the Oratory on a legal basis, yet, as a matter of fact, there exists an Act of Parliament which would prevent the operations of the Society from being legally harassed, or from an Episcopal point of view illegally suppressed, and to which it might appeal for protection. An Act was

passed on the 14th August, 1855, entitled, 'An Act for Securing the Liberty of Religious Worship.' The Act is popularly known as Lord Shaftesbury's Act; legally, as 18 and 19 *Victoriæ*, Cap. 86. Under the directions and through the influence of that nobleman, with the active co-operation of the Bishops, the Act declares it to be 'expedient that the Law affecting Assemblies for Religious Worship should be amended.' The more important portion of the Act is contained in the First Section. By this Section, according to the marginal reading, 'no prosecution (is) to be maintainable for assembling for Religious Worship in a place of Meeting not certified' under certain former Acts. The words of the Section are as follows :—

'1. From and after the passing of this Act, nothing contained in the above-mentioned Acts [1 W. & M. Sess. 1. c. 18, and 52 G. 3. c. 155], or in an Act passed in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of the Reign of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, shall apply to the Congregations or Assemblies hereinafter mentioned, or any of them; that is to say,

- (1) To any Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship held in any Parish or any Ecclesiastical District, and conducted by the Incumbent, or in case the Incumbent is not resident, by the Curate of such Parish or District, or by any Person authorised by them respectively :
- (2) To any Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship meeting in a private Dwelling House or on the Premises belonging thereto :
- (3) To any Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship meeting occasionally in any Building or Buildings not usually appropriated to Purposes of Religious Worship :

And no Person permitting any such Congregation to meet as herein mentioned in any Place occupied by him shall be liable to any Penalty for so doing.'

The Congregations or Assemblies, therefore, to which immunity from a fine for each time of meeting, 'at the discretion of the Justices who shall convict,' of a 'sum not exceeding 20*l.* and not less than 20*s.*,' refers are three-fold, of which the second would meet the case of the proposed Oratory. For instance, Clause Two runs thus—'To any Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship meeting in a private Dwelling House or *on the Premises belonging thereto.*' Hence, the Society of the Holy Cross is legally at liberty to establish an Oratory for public Divine Worship, provided only it be situated on the premises belonging to a private Clergy-house. The First Clause of the Act provides for the immunity of Assemblies whose worship is conducted by the parish Priest, or by any one authorised by him; but this Clause could only affect the Oratory under circumstances too favourable to contemplate, and which hence need hardly be entertained, *viz.*, securing a site in the quadrilateral above-named in the parochial domain of a friendly Incumbent. The Third Clause provides for the immunity of those who meet for worship occasionally in places not usually appropriated to purposes of worship. It is not difficult for us to see the tendency of these two latter Clauses. The Third gives a licence for Services in Theatres. The First gives a licence for Prayer-meetings in Schoolrooms. Lord Shaftesbury, and his Episcopal supporters, could not have entertained an idea, with respect to Clause Two, that it would have been made use of on behalf of other than mere Protestant assemblages. He could hardly have contemplated, under its provisions, the establishment of an Oratory such as is proposed by the Society of the Holy Cross.

Such, however, is the force of the legal sanction, under the shelter of which, it may be repeated, it is *not* proposed to found an Oratory; but by which it may be possible to claim legal protection for its establishment, on the grounds contemplated in Lord Shaftesbury's Act, in the event, which is highly improbable, of the law being set in motion to interfere with our organisation. It is true, and it is only fair to state, that some persons deny the application of the Act in question to the case before us. They affirm that no Act of Parliament can override Canon Law; that the Act under consideration recognises former laws touching public Divine Worship, and keeps them in force, saving only to the extent to which it distinctly repeals them; and that the Act does not license *persons* to minister, but only legalises *places* in which services may be held, and protects congregations who assemble. The prerogatives of the Bishop, it is added, remain untouched; and his licence for celebrating is still needful. This may be true. But, on the other hand, Civil Law will not permit itself to be set on one side by laws Ecclesiastical. And the question now is one of Civil Law only; and without further evidence, it does not appear that legally any distinction is or can be drawn between the different forms of Religious Worship. Preaching, Prayers, and Celebrations, to different persons, are only various forms of Public Worship; and the Act, whether intentionally or not, and perhaps there was such intention, and so far as legislation can affect the case, distinctly legalises, under certain conditions, all and every form of Religious Worship which those may be pleased to adopt who avail themselves of its sanctions.

The ecclesiastical position of the Oratory, it may be repeated, is the only one which we need consider. And this, it must be owned, is a position of some difficulty

under the present position of affairs, both civil and religious; though it is not a position which, in my judgment, we need shrink from accepting. Before, however, the position to be assumed is discussed, it may be well to mention a plan which has been proposed for adoption to meet the difficulties that are felt towards the scheme which it is my duty to place before you. It is proposed by grave persons, who feel the responsibility of acting without, not to say against, Episcopal authority—it is proposed, if it be possible, to gain the sanction of the Bishop of the diocese for the establishment of an Oratory, before embarking in the undertaking. Without venturing to discuss the probabilities that the present occupant of the see would give his Episcopal sanction to the plan, we will assume that the Bishop consents to our scheme. The Bishop, however, is simply powerless to bind his successors in the see. And it would not be at all an improbable contingency, that the next Bishop of London might withhold the consent which the present Bishop had accorded. In what position would the Oratory then be placed? Supposing we were so far compromised to continuance as to have completed our organism, and to have secured, in brick and mortar, a permanent building in the quadrilateral above-named; supposing the Oratory of the Holy Cross to be a fact and a Church to be erected, at a change of Episcopal authority in what position should we be placed? It may be replied, that sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. I would answer, we must endeavour to foresee, in order to avoid, future contingencies: and it would not be wise, in my opinion, to establish an Oratory on one principle, and to continue it upon another and totally opposite principle. The establishment of the Oratory therefore on the uncertain foundation of a variable quantity, *viz.*, the temporary sanction of the present Bishop, is

not to be commended to the consideration of the Society of the Holy Cross.

But there is another form which this plan may assume, which is indeed only a limited form of the first. Those who would hold to a legal view of the case, modified by a certain amount of ecclesiastical authority, advocate taking advantage, avowedly, of the First Clause of Lord Shaftesbury's Act, and establishing an Oratory in the parish of a sympathising Incumbent. But the same argument which was applied against positively seeking the Bishop's consent, would apply to gaining the assent of the parish Priest. To a like extent only with the Bishop, could the Priest give his consent. He too would be powerless to bind his successor in the living. And the Society's difficulties would only be removed onwards one step, from the present to the future, by the adoption of this plan. And, moreover, though the temper of the present Bishop need not be estimated, it may be safely affirmed that within the proposed quadrilateral limits assigned to the Oratory's position, no parish Priest can be found to give the needful consent. Hence, any plan which would assure to the Oratory a temporary position only of legality in the State, which would secure merely a partial and incomplete recognition by the law, is a plan which, in my judgment, ought to be strongly deprecated. Of course, this difficulty, in either shape in which it has been mentioned, may be overcome. None would more heartily rejoice than myself that the obstacles should be surmounted. But, in such a statement as the present, we must accept facts as they exist. And as the facts of the day meet with us, so must we be prepared to meet our difficulties.

We are therefore reduced to return to first principles. And here it may commend itself to many minds that the present condition in which we find ourselves placed, the

abnormal and disorganised state of the Church, the existing scandalous and vexatious development of the union of Church and State, and the perseveringly and almost innately hostile aspect which our Bishops, as an Order, take to the Catholic Revival, *necessitates* a corresponding, though not identical, course of action on our parts, as Priests in the Church of GOD. If we are looked upon as enemies by the Episcopate, we must act on the defensive. If we are subjected to legalised illegality by the State, we must exercise passive fortitude, and ignore the requirements of judge-made law. If we live in a state of Ecclesiastical chaos in the Church, we must strive to keep as near the centre of the whirlpool as may be, and be affected as little as possible by its eccentric gyrations. In short, Ecclesiastical disorder, State tyranny, and Episcopal antagonism can only be met by Priestly organisation, union, and devotion. We must act, in GOD'S sight, so far as we may in accordance with the spirit of the Canon Law, as Priests of His Church. And the plan I venture to propose for your acceptance is one not unknown, I believe, in certain features of its outline, to Catholic Christendom. My meaning may be expressed in the language of the Act which was intended by its authors to effect a different work in the Church of GOD. For I would wish to see established a 'Congregation for Religious Worship meeting in a private Dwelling-house, or on the premises belonging thereto.' I would establish a 'Dwelling-house' for the members, or for certain members, of the Society of the Holy Cross. I would erect 'on the premises belonging thereto' an Oratory. I would open the doors of such an Oratory to any who chose to enter and therein to form a 'Congregation for Religious Worship.' And I would act thus, not as a rival of the parish Priest, but as a coadjutor to him; not in opposition to the parochial

system, but as supplementing it; not with antagonism to the Bishop, but simply independent, to this extent and to this extent only, of Episcopal supervision. Will any affirm that such a course would be less in accordance with Church law than it is clearly within the boundaries of the law of the land? I think not.

Let us however drop all reference to Acts of Parliament. The Oratory of the Society of the Holy Cross would be the Private Chapel of a Religious Society or Brotherhood which would be open to all who were willing to worship within its walls. Is the foundation of such an Oratory, from a Catholic point of view, illegal, even if devoid of Episcopal countenance? We will confine ourselves to the question of the Bishop's sanction, for the parochial system has utterly broken down in England, not the least signally in London: and therefore the Incumbent's permission in whose parish, supposing him to be unfriendly to the scheme, we had the misfortune to be located, need not be entertained. But as to the Bishop's licence, it is generally admitted that a Religious House may be established, a Chapel may be built, and services may be held for its members, independent of the official sanction of the Bishop. If this be granted as legal in a Church point of view, can it be denied to be legal if the doors of the Oratory remain open instead of closed, if those without may worship in it as well as those within? I cannot think that it may. A College Chapel or a School Chapel are no unmeet comparisons to the proposed Oratory. If Divine Service in these are in accordance with Catholic custom, the custom of the Church cannot be violated by admitting to the spiritual benefits of the proposed Chapel any who care to avail themselves of such privileges. And it is not at all clear that the position of many Religious Houses of old, which were not under

Episcopal authority, would not afford a parallel to our present difficulties, and would, to a certain extent, answer them. For though such Houses were under a different, and sometimes a higher than Episcopal, authority, we may honestly affirm our wish and desire not to be deprived of *some* authority, lacking which we conform ourselves as best we may to the circumstances of the age in which GOD has called us to play a part.

A distinction is sometimes attempted to be drawn between the administration of the Sacraments and the recitation of the Hours, or Preaching, in the Oratory of the future ; and that, apart from Episcopal consent, the last may be lawful, though the first may be illegal. But even if we admit that this distinction, in Canon Law, between preaching and celebrating, which is doubtful, I apprehend that a sufficient answer to this may be found in the thought, that if we voluntarily accept Episcopal authority, we must give to it a ready and docile obedience ; and that if a Bishop objected to Mass ritually celebrated, he would not be likely to welcome Vespers rendered musically, or Evensong with Incense at the Magnificat, or even a Catholic Mission combined with Catholic worship. But a more potent argument would probably weigh with most members of the Society of the Holy Cross. Would they be willing to establish an Oratory simply to say Sext in, or in which to hold a Retreat ? Would they be content with the circumference of the Catholic system, and escape the centre ? We are not anxious to establish a Hall for preaching : we desiderate an Oratory in which to say Mass.

There is one consideration, however, which may be thought to be of force. Although the Oratory as a whole might lack Episcopal sanction, its individual members would each possess jurisdiction accorded by Episcopal

powers. Although the corporation might be without the Bishop's control, each element of the aggregate would be under the Bishop's rule. Of course I speak generally: and it would be wise, perhaps, that those who bear office in the Oratory of the Holy Cross should, as a rule, be likewise situated, as beneficed parish Priests, in the diocese of London. This provision would perhaps tend to remove the objections of some persons. For if Clergy are ordained to act as Priests under a Bishop—and provided always they do not invade parochial rights, a provision which would be enforced—it is a hypocritical reading of jurisdiction to affirm that they have Episcopal authority *e.g.* at Stoke Newington, but that they have it not in the quadrilateral area so often spoken of. I apprehend that, under the conditions proposed for the foundation of the Oratory, as a Private Chapel, and so far as it only is concerned, a Bishop has no power to limit a parish Priest's work to any given Church, or to restrict the habitual jurisdiction he imparts to any given locality within the boundaries of his diocese. Neither has he the power to rule that a Priest may celebrate *e.g.* in the Church of S. Barnabas, but is inhibited from preaching in that of S. Mary Magdalene.

The whole question of jurisdiction and Episcopal obedience, unfortunately, is involved in much confusion by reason of the anomalous position in the Catholic Church in which the Church of England is placed. It is also a question of much difficulty in itself. It is obviously unreal to apply Canon Law absolutely and unbendingly to our condition, when our condition is essentially different, both in outline and detail, from that assumed by Canon Law, and upon which Canon Law legislates. It is unjust to interpret the Canons literally in the case of Priests and figuratively in the case of Bishops. If a hard

and fast line is to be drawn around the ancient Canons, the line must include the Episcopate as well as the Presbyterate. If the line is not to be hard and fast, Priests not only may, but must, benefit by the relaxation. Avowedly, then, we must accept Canon Law on the principles of accommodation. And the view here taken of the question, with much diffidence, is this—that habitual jurisdiction is given by CHRIST to all Priests at their ordination, *absolutely*, to be exercised over any one who willingly submits himself to the same. The actual jurisdiction of the parish Priest is not hereby invaded, first, because, though locally within his parish, the Oratory is a Private Chapel; and secondly, because those who frequent it either are not his parishioners, or are not *pro tanto* his parishioners. And if it be objected that such *imperium in imperio* is unknown, or hostile, to the spirit of the Canons of the ancient Church, it may be replied that, by analogy in this instance, and directly in the case of another Sacrament, we of the Anglican Communion are distinctly compromised to this principle. For, the Church of England recognises the habitual jurisdiction of her Priesthood, absolutely, when exercised over any one who willingly submits himself to the same—in the case of the Sacrament of Absolution.

What, then, it may be asked, would be the position of the Oratory of the Holy Cross? I answer—It would be the *Private Chapel of a Religious Society*, from the Offices and Services of which no Catholic who desired to participate would be excluded. It would be the Private Chapel of a Society which not only asserts no local jurisdiction in the parish in which it is founded, but distinctly disclaims such jurisdiction. It would be an Oratory for Priests of the Church who claim authority over, and obedience from, those only who worship within its walls,

and who voluntarily yield the obedience and authority which is claimed. On this position we should take our stand; and for our authority, until the conditions both of Church and State, with which we find ourselves involved, are simplified, we appeal to the inherent rights of the Priesthood, to our own acquired powers in Ordination, to an Episcopate better advised, and to the Church of the future, less hardly tyrannised over by the State, and more free to exercise the authority given to her by CHRIST Himself. And I earnestly hope that the Society of the Holy Cross may decide—supposing such course to be compatible with Catholic consent, as under the circumstances it may be considered to be—not to seek, at all events at the first, Episcopal sanction, nor to look for Episcopal support. For myself, I believe that any other course would be a grievous, a fatal mistake, which would make shipwreck of the whole plan. I have the greatest possible respect for the Office which Bishops hold, which is compatible with half a lifetime of evidence of the way in which many individual members of the Order systematically degrade the Office, to suit their own personal ends, to favour their own peculiar opinions, or to further their own private judgment. It is impossible to affirm of the Order, as at present State-appointed, as now constituted, and from a Catholic point of view, that its ordination vows are respected. To an Order, therefore which deliberately violates, whether conscientiously or not, the terms upon which it possesses any claims to obedience, it is equally impossible to render that obedience which our own ordination vows contemplate. An Order whose ‘admonitions’ and whose ‘judgments’ are not ‘godly,’ how is it possible to ‘obey reverently,’ and to follow with ‘a glad mind and will’? As Catholic Priests who believe in, were ordained into, and reverence

the Church, this is beyond the bounds of possibility. It becomes a question which of the two are to be obeyed—*GOD*, in the person of His Church, or man, under the aspect of a chief Shepherd. I do not think that I at all overstate, and I certainly do not willingly overstate the case, against our spiritual Fathers. For I appeal to members of the Society of the Holy Cross to declare whether or not the Catholic Revival has not, as a whole, prospered (aye, marvellously prospered), not by reason of Episcopal support, but in direct opposition to almost every single Bishop who has unfortunately come athwart its Divine course. And if we descend from generalities to particulars, I can ask, with confidence as to your reply, what special and particular developement in doctrine, or in ritual, or in discipline, have, not one Bishop, nor two Bishops, but have not many Bishops actively and even energetically opposed? So far as I know, when the developement has been made in a Catholic direction, not one. Suffer me then, once more, earnestly to exhort the Society of the Holy Cross, in the establishment of an Oratory in London, to rely on the inherent powers alone of an ordained Priesthood which, in *GOD'S* Providence, has carried the Catholic Revival from its origin to its present point of developement ; and not to rely upon uncertain, fickle, and hesitating support (the most we can hope for) at the hands of almost any member of an Episcopal body which corporately has in vain attempted to stem the tide of advancing Catholicity.

The six points which I desired to lay before you have now been discussed with as much fulness as the question, in its present preliminary stage, permitted. There are, however, other points upon which I wish to secure your attention before deciding whether or not the scheme pro-

posed may claim further consideration from the Society of the Holy Cross.

The Oratory which I have attempted to picture would possess two characteristics which have never yet been combined in any single place of worship to which we have had access. It would be free from the tyranny of the State. It would be independent of Episcopal interference. Let me say a few words under each of these heads.

1. I shall assume, what must be only too painfully conscious to us all, and what most of us are more acquainted with than myself, familiarity with the present anomalous, immoral, and anti-Christian Union which exists between Church and State. I may assume also that, as a Society, we are at one in our wish to see such an Union dissolved. I wish it might be further assumed that we are all mentally resolved to do all that we may to hasten Disestablishment. But assent to the facts of the case is enough for my purpose; and to assent that the Oratory of the Holy Cross would be free from State tyranny is sufficient to bind us together in united action. Such freedom would shelter us from the vexatious, contradictory, anti-legal decisions of judge-made law, whether delivered in the Court of Final Appeal, to which no Catholic adheres; or in the lower Courts, which not only are not constituted according to ancient precedent, but also allow of appeal to the higher lay Courts, and to which, therefore, no Catholic ought, in consistency, to give countenance.

2. In the rapidly approaching prospect of Disestablishment—a prospect, however, which may not, though it probably will, be realised in our lifetime—it would be a

fact beyond comparison important that an Oratory could be presented to the eyes of the nation, free from the tyranny of the State and independent of Episcopal interference, which yet should consistently and conscientiously submit to authority—the authority, namely, of the Catholic Church. Such a sight would do more to educate Catholics in general to the point of declaring for Disestablishment, than perhaps any other means of teaching popular opinion. But, then, one and all, so far as it is possible with the present phase of Society, must agree to be bound by authority. We must not accept Catholic custom in one point, and reject it another. We must not teach high doctrine, and practise lax discipline. We must not assert stern discipline, and encourage ‘moderation’ in doctrine. We must not adopt the highest ritual in conjunction with discipline, and doctrine which is not comparable to it. The application of the Vincentian rule for doctrine to all essential points both of discipline and of ritual, and to accept in non-essentials what the West has practised, and what the East sanctions where the West is silent, would seem to cover all needful points of possible difference. Especially in two points would it be essential to present an unbroken front to the enemy, if we would repulse the attacks which are sure to be made upon our apparent withdrawal from all authority and our actual independence of visible authority—one in either subject indicated. We must be unanimous, I firmly believe, in our adherence to the Catholic use, from the fasting Celebration of the Last Supper to the present day, of ourselves celebrating, or of communicating others, fasting from earthly food. And we must be decided, I also venture to think, in adhering to the ancient Catholic Ritual which prevails at this moment in the great Western Patriarchate of which we still actually, though outwardly and unjustly

severed, form an integral portion. No doubt an elaborate and symbolical Use might be framed by tessellating into our Order a square from the Ambrosian Office, a triangle from the Mozarabic Missal, a circle from the Sarum Use; or polygons from the Eastern Rites: but the mosaic would be wanting in harmony, the ritual would be only a fancy ritual, the Office would become eclectic. The English Use, however imperfect, mutilated, transposed, supplemented, is a living branch of a living tree. It may be grafted from vital sources which still possess authority. It cannot be impregnated by crystallised forms of life, however beautiful, ancient, or edifying.

In conclusion, I would only ask leave to say two things.

Firstly—That I have done little more than elaborate some details of a plan which, in one form or another, I have for years mentally considered.*

Secondly—That I believe a great and noble work is offered to the Society of the Holy Cross for its acceptance—not in the words of this paper, but in the facts which these words describe; not by the writer of the paper, but by GOD, in Whose permissive Will these facts have their origin. Persons are widely, are loudly, have been for long, crying for some such centre of action as I have attempted to depict. I plead not for the literal adoption of the ideas here imperfectly placed on record. But I do

* I may perhaps be allowed to refer to an Essay in the Third Series of *The Church and the World*, 1868, which discusses, with the writer's usual felicity, some points raised in this paper. It is entitled 'Missions and Preaching Orders,' and is from the pen of the Rev. J. E. Vaux.

earnestly plead for the adoption of some plan which may include some of these ideas. The Society of the Holy Cross possesses unusual facilities for the origination of, as well as unusual power to continue, such a work. It may almost be assumed to have a direct call from GOD, and will incur grave responsibility before GOD, if it disregard such call. I pray GOD the Society may not only think that the subject deserves its counsels, efforts, and prayers, but that the question demands its active support and its practical origination. The Society would merit the blessing of the future Church, as it would insure the gratitude of all living Catholics if it consented to establish in London an Oratory of the Holy Cross.



